

# Jonathan Agnew



They say that one should never go back, and in reinstating Peter Moores as their head coach, the England and Wales Cricket Board has given further ammunition to its increasingly hostile opponents who truly believe that those who run English cricket

have lost the plot.

It was inevitable that England's 5-0 hammering by Australia in the winter would raise a lot of awkward questions. Some of us had been writing for months that the team had become arrogant and out of touch and that once that happens in sport you are setting yourself up for a nasty reality check. Andy Flower, the head coach, had not been expected to resign but someone had to take responsibility for England's startling decline, and the cricketing public could relate to that even though Flower is one of the finest in the business.

It was the sacking of Kevin Pietersen in February and, crucially, the lack of explanation from the Board for doing so that turned many of the dissenting voices into a howl of protest. Those opponents now see the return of Moores as proof of an anti-Pietersen lobby at Lord's, since it was a fallout between the two that ended Moores' previous reign, and with it Pietersen's brief stint as captain in 2009.

The Board will deny that, and my own belief is that Moores' return is completely unrelated to Pietersen's departure. He is the best available

man for the job, but this whole exercise has been a PR disaster for English cricket. The Board hides behind a confidentiality agreement made with Pietersen as part of his severance deal, but only one side was ever going to gain from such an arrangement. Pietersen has an unfortunate history of undermining the authority of teams he has represented in the past but this can be interpreted as a failure of the management rather than of the player

**‘Pietersen has an unfortunate history of undermining the authority’**

whose batting talent makes him one of the most entertaining in world cricket. So far there has been no explanation for Pietersen's sacking other than he became 'disconnected' from his team-mates –

hardly seismic stuff and

definitely not enough to appease the detractors. Instead we must wait until October when Pietersen's book will be published, but that will tell only his version of events. How the ECB finally gives its own account, and whether it will be sufficient when they do, will be a constant distraction this summer.

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